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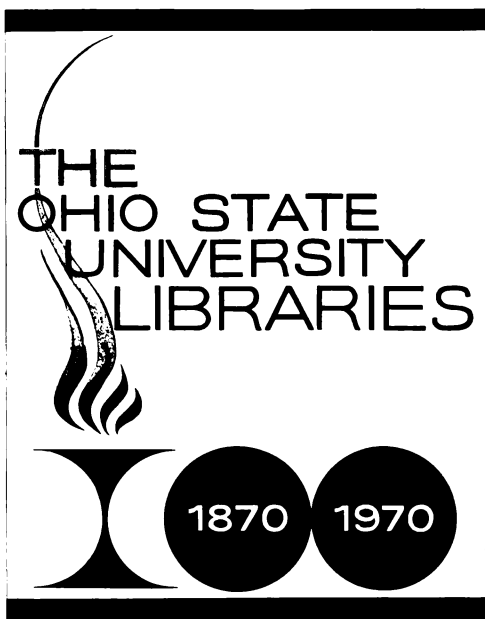


AMONG THE FREAKS

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ALDEN

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Among the Freaks

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The Wild Man of Borneo.

How I became acquainted with the doorkeeper is of no consequence. He assisted me to pass away several weary hours that I once spent in Chicago. I know very well that they ought not to have been weary hours. I should have visited the pork-packing establishments, and gazed at and duly admired the fifteen and twenty-story buildings that Chicago will continue to pride herself upon until an earthquake comes and convinces the occupants of the upper stories that it would have been better for them if they had never been born. It happened, however, that I was

snowbound and waiting until the snowploughs should succeed in opening the way for the trains. Being thus compelled to wait against my will, I was discontented, and took no delight in pork or tail buildings. It was in these circumstances that I met the doorkeeper, and found him to be, in the words of the landlord of my hotel, "One of the nicest gentlemen and spryest fighters in all Chicago."

The doorkeeper was the chief owner and manager of a dime museum. The American dime museum does not bear the most distant resemblance to the British museum. It is simply an exhibition of monstrosities, genuine and artificial, and the public is admitted to view them on payment of a dime. These monstrosities, known in the "profession" as "freaks," seem to be produced in quantities to sup-

ply the demand. Every dime museum professes to have the tallest giant, the smallest dwarf, the fattest woman, and the most beautiful Circassian girl in existence. There are three or four dime museums in nearly every city in the United States, not to speak of those that are on the road. How they all manage to find the necessary stock of genuine "freaks" is a mystery which the outside public cannot solve.

My doorkeeper was, as I have said, the proprietor of his museum, but he occupied the post of doorkeeper for the reason that he could thus make sure of receiving the money paid for admission, and, being a powerfully-built man, could prevent the entrance of disorderly persons, and thus preserve the reputation of his museum as an "unequaled family resort"—a claim

made for it by the handbills. He loved to talk of his professional experiences and in unfolding to me the private life of his "freaks" he opened up a new world. This is the story he told me concerning his "wild man of Borneo."

"Yes, sir! As I was saying, managing a company of 'freaks' ain't no picnic. They're the most quarrelsome lot that was ever got together outside of a meeting of politicians who want to bring about harmony in the party. A fat woman puts on more airs than any two Eytalian primy-donners, and for bad temper there is nothing that can touch a beautiful Circassian girl. I have to spend about one-third of my time in keeping my people from throwing crockery and pulling hair. Except when they're falling in love, there ain't a day that some one of them don't come to

me and swear that he or she'll leave if I don't discharge some one else.

"Last year I had a wild man of Borneo who was dead in love with



The Original Wild Man of Borneo.

the tattooed lady. It was Barnum that invented the tattooed business, and for a while it was the best line of business in the profession. Every

museum was bound to have a tattooed girl, with a yarn about her having been captured by the Indians and tattooed when she was a little girl. My Circassian girl jumped at the chance of changing her line, for Circassian girls don't begin to draw as they did twenty years ago, and when I proposed to her to do the tattooed-girl act, she set to work at once to draw patterns for the tattooing, and, being a mighty smart girl, she got up some of the best designs that I ever saw.

"My wild man of Borneo was a thin, cadaverous little chap, chock full of sentiment and poetry and all that sort of nonsense. When he got on his paint, and danced his war dance, and howled—in what folks thought was the Borneo language—and swallowed raw meat, you'd have thought that he was

about as murdering a style of savage as could be found, though he really wouldn't have hurt a fly. We kept him in a cage labeled 'dangerous' until his part in the performance came round, and then a keeper would take him out and lead him, with a chain around his waist, to the platform, where he went through with his dancing and raw-meat eating. I paid him a good salary, and he was worth it. I wish I had him back again in his cage. The wild man I've got now is an Irishman, and he can't howl without a brogue that's bound to give him away some day.

"Now, this wild man, the first one I mentioned, you understand, was the kind of chap that is always falling in love, and, of course, he fell in love with the beautiful Circassian. He wanted to marry her, and, seeing as she didn't draw very

well, and was getting tired of the business, and, knowing that he was getting a good salary and was a leading man in his line, she agreed to marry him. I never liked the girl, for she was bad-tempered and selfish, and I knew she didn't care a straw for the wild man, but I told her and him that if they'd wait six months I'd give them a bang-up wedding that shouldn't cost them a cent, and, of course, she insisted on waiting.

"When she went into the tattooed business, the wild man, being engaged to her, naturally insisted on doing the stenciling. I know you won't give it away, so I don't mind telling you that the tattooing is put on every Monday with a stencil plate and brush, and is generally washed off on Saturday night when it begins to get faded. It takes about two dozen different

stencil plates to do a girl up in style, and give her a variety of patterns. These plates were always kept in the property-room, and when Monday morning came around the wild man would get them out and tattoo his ladylove as gently as if he was a great artist, painting a first-class, hand-made picture. He took about twice as long as was necessary for the job, and I will say that when he was done, he turned out the best tattooed girl that Chicago ever saw.

“Well, one day I hired a Chinese sword swallower. He was a Frenchman, though I didn’t know it when I hired him. If I had, he would never have come into my show, for a Frenchman is the most troublesome ‘freak’ in the whole profession, not excepting even the dwarf, and he’s, generally speaking, a holy terror. Naturally, this

Frenchman began to make love to the tattooed girl. I don't blame him for that, for, being a Frenchman, he had to act according to his nature; but he knew she was engaged to the wild man, and he had no business to meddle with an engaged girl, especially as there was the fat woman, who hadn't anybody attached to her, and would have been thankful even for a Frenchman.

“Now, this sword swallower was a rather handsome young fellow, with lots of swagger about him, and he gathered that tattooed girl in without the least trouble. She threw over the wild man and wouldn't have anything more to do with him. She wouldn't even let him tattoo her, and said that the sword swallower was twice the artist that he was in handling a stencil brush. The poor chap came to me

and said that he had made up his mind to commit suicide or to leave the business. He said that Je-



The Chinese Sword Swallower.

mima, for that was the girl's name, seemed to hate him. 'Once she used to admire me in my great

meat-eating act,' said the wild man. 'Now she says that it is perfectly disgusting to eat raw meat, and she can't endure my black paint. She tells me that it's a low line of business to be a wild man, and that she thinks that sword swallowing is perfectly lovely. I say it ain't nothing of the sort. A sword ain't half as digestible as raw beef, and I don't care who says it is.'

"'You give her up, my boy,' I said. 'Don't waste your time over her. You're in the very front rank in your line, and that is something to be proud of.'

"'I know it,' said he; 'but I can't stay in this show if that sword swallower stays. My contract will be up next month, and you might as well let me off now. If you don't, there is nothing for me except the cold and silent grave.'

"'You drop that nonsense!' said

I. 'The grave's no sort of place for a man of talent like you. Leave this business to me, and I promise you that inside of a week *Jemima* will give that Frenchman his walk-



"Stenciling."

ing ticket, and you'll have the field to yourself again.'

"He was a trusting little beggar, and had no end of confidence in me. What I said brought up his

spirits again, and that afternoon he howled better than he had ever howled before, and two women fainted away when he jumped at them with his spear, as if he was going to run them through then and there.

“Now, I happened to have a lot of stencil plates that I used to mark boxes with, and, knowing that the Frenchman couldn’t read or write, I felt pretty sure that I could put up a job on him that would settle his business with the tattooed girl. In the course of the day I took six of her stencil plates out of the drawer where they were kept and put six of mine on the top of the pile in their place, and waited for next Monday morning to come round.

“Naturally, it came round, and, naturally, the Frenchman was on hand at eleven o’clock to stencil

the girl, so as to be ready for the afternoon exhibition. He never noticed any difference between the plates he had been using and the ones I had furnished, for, besides not being able to read, he was so taken up with making love to the girl, that he never had no time to notice anything else. It was the same way with her. She supposed that the stenciling was going on all right, and she never so much as looked at the plates, knowing that the Frenchman always used them in regular order, beginning with the top of the pile.

“He always began with her back, and when he had used up six of the stencil plates, he had her shoulders and forehead stenciled, and then went to work on her neck. The plates he used for this part of his work were the regular ones, and, as the girl couldn't see her forehead

or her back, she supposed they were all right. Which they wasn't, as you will presently understand.

"After the tattooing was over, and the Frenchman had gone to dinner, I took the girl into my office and kept her there till the performance began, so that nobody should be able to see her. While the show was going on, she had to sit in a chair on a raised platform, where everybody could see her, and when her turn came the chair was slowly twisted round, while the lecturer told the yarn about her having been captured by Indians, and explained her diagrams. She couldn't help noticing that people stared at her more than usual when they came in, and she supposed that the stenciling must have been done extra particular well.

"What they were staring at, however, was her forehead, which

was stenciled 'J. H. M.,' being my initials, and they naturally wondered how the Indians came to tattoo a girl with English letters. But it was when the lecturer began to explain her, and turned her chair round, so as to show her back, that the fun began. Across the back of her neck was 'Keep Dry,' in big letters; a little farther down was 'Very Fragile' and 'Handle with Care.' One arm was marked 'Strictly Private,' and the other 'This Side Up,' and, as good luck would have it, the Frenchman had not got a single plate upside down.

"Well, when the people saw it, they first laughed themselves sick, and then got mad. They said they had been swindled, and that the girl had never been near no Indians. One fellow said that seeing as she wasn't a leopard she couldn't change her own spots, and that,

consequently, I had changed them for her, and was a thief and an impostor. And how they chaffed that poor girl! I really felt sorry for her, though I knew she deserved it all. As for the lecturer, he left as soon as the first egg hit him on the head, and the girl would have left, too, if she had been able to get out of the crowd.

"I let the row run along a little in hopes that the Frenchman would get mixed up in it, but he was no such man, and he bolted the minute it began. So, seeing as there was no danger that the crowd would wreck the establishment, I went in with three policemen and my four teamsters, and we cleared out the people without much trouble. I told them that there had been a mistake, and that the tattooed girl being sick couldn't show that day, and my secretary, not

wishing to disappoint the people, had got a substitute without consulting me. What with offering them free tickets for the next day, and licking half-a-dozen or so of the most cheeky, I settled the affair up, and the next day the show was as peaceful as ever.

“What became of the wild man? Oh! I ’most forgot to tell you. When the tattooed girl found out what the row had been about, she swore that the Frenchman had done it on purpose, and that she would never see him again, barring such time as might be necessary to tear his eyes out. He heard of this, and had sense enough to keep on his side of the house, and she never had a chance to get at his eyes. After the month was up he left me, and that was the last I ever saw of him. The field being clear, the wild man makes up to the girl

again, and she takes him back, making it a condition, however, that he should give up the wild-man business and go into some other. So he set to work and learned the sword-swallowing act, though a sword swallower doesn't command more than half the average wages of a first-class wild man. He's doing sword swallowing in my museum now, and don't like it very much. He told me the other day that he hankered for his old life. 'This hyer swallowing business is too conventional for me,' he said. 'There ain't no room for the display of histrionic talent like there was in that raw-meat act. But she won't have it, and I must do what pleases her.'

"They calculate to be married in about two months, and then I'll lose them both, for, of course, they'll quarrel, so that I shall have

to get rid of the pair of them. Well, it was what might have been expected after letting a Frenchman into the show. If it wasn't that she is a mighty handsome woman, and has got the best stenciling in the profession, I'd bribe her to leave on the sly, and I'd get her lover to go back to the wild-man business. It's the only line fit for a man of his talent, and he's just throwing himself away, as you might say, now that he is only a Chinese sword swallower."

How the Fat Woman Eloped.

“Yes, sir,” continued the door-keeper; “fat women are more sentimental than any other women. The fatter they are the more they fall in love. Though, to tell the truth, the most sentimental fat woman I ever had wasn’t by any means the fattest. She only weighed two hundred and eighty pounds when she came to me, and I lost her when she had just got up to three hundred and forty; and very sorry I was to lose her, for she had a great future before her, if she had only been willing to stick

to business and had kept up her pride in her profession.

"For the first six months I had her I thought she was a jewel. She never took the least bit of exercise, and she dieted as carefully as if she had been a dyspeptic with a stomach in ruins, who was trying to put himself to rights again by eating nothing but the most disagreeable kinds of food. By the way, did you ever notice that the only way to get even with a stomach that has once gone back on you is to starve it, or give it nothing that any rational stomach likes? The minute you begin to treat a stomach kindly, and let it have the sort of meat and drink it wants, that minute you are on the road to dyspepsia. A stomach is just like a small boy—you'll spoil it if you ever let it have its own way.

"I hadn't had this fat woman a

week when I saw that she was as bad as all the rest of them, so far as falling in love goes. Our giant was taken with the scarlet fever, which was a most ridiculous sort of



Extra Stout.

disease for a man of six feet and a half high, and mighty sick he was. Of course, I couldn't send him to a hospital, where everybody could see him, without destroying his market value, so he had to be

nursed in his room at the museum. Nobody was willing to nurse him till the fat woman came forward and said that she would nurse the poor man if everybody else was afraid. Naturally, everybody applauded her bravery, as everybody always does when a person undertakes to do something that other people are afraid to do, and are glad to get rid of doing. I didn't altogether like the idea of temporarily losing the services of the fat woman as well as the giant, but I like to let my people have all the pleasure they can, so I told the fat woman to go ahead, and I would pay her half her salary while she was off duty.

"Of course, the fat woman fell in love with the giant before she had been twenty-four hours in the sick room, but I will say that she made a first-class nurse. There was no

walking around the room, and knocking over bottles, and putting the furniture in order, and sweeping the floor up, as is always going on when you have an ordinary-sized nurse. The fat woman spent the whole day and night sitting in her chair, except when the giant wanted his medicine, or when he tried to get up, being delirious, and go on the platform in his nightshirt. Whenever this fit was on him, the fat woman would just lean her weight on him till he quieted down.

“Once she accidentally leaned a little too much on his chest, and the man was pretty nearly suffocated before she noticed that anything unusual was the matter, but generally speaking she did her duty in a way that laid over any regular hospital nurse that I ever saw.

“When the giant got well the fat woman, who considered herself en-

gaged to him, though he swore that he had never said a word of the kind, expected him to marry her, and when she found out that he hadn't the least idea of any such foolishness she was destroyed, as you might say. For about a week she lost her appetite and didn't eat enough to keep her alive, not to speak of making progress in her profession, and I had to speak pretty sharply to her about the dishonesty of growing thin when she had a contract with me that obliged her to increase her weight by all legitimate means. However, at the end of the week she braced up again and soon got over her passion.

"That's the way with fat women. They get over their disappointments, and are looking out for fresh ones quicker than any other woman outside of a dime museum. I'd like to find some intelligent

man, say a parson or a doctor, who could tell me the reason of this. I can't see myself why there should



The two were excellent friends.

be any difference between a fat woman and a thin woman in the matter of their affections; but there

is a big difference. If you want just to carry on with a girl, take a middling fat one, and she'll get over it without giving you any trouble. But if you mean business, and want to marry a girl who'll stick to you, don't you take any girl weighing more than a hundred and twenty pounds.

"In course of time, the fat woman forgot all about her affair with the giant, and the two were excellent friends, both being good-tempered and good-hearted in their way. But pretty soon the fat woman fell in love again, and this time it was with an outsider. He was a sort of ticket speculator, and about as worthless a fellow as there was in all Cincinnati, which was where my show was located at the time, and anybody except a fat woman would have known that if he made love to a woman, it was because he

thought there was money in it. He supposed that the fat woman was well-to-do in the world, as most of them are, seeing as they draw good salaries and have no expenses to speak of. Besides, he was sharp enough to see that she was putting on flesh day by day, and would naturally command more salary according as her weight increased. He used to come into my place pretty nearly every day and have a little talk with the fat woman, and say how-de-do to the other 'freaks,' and maybe try to borrow fifty cents of me, for I had known him a good many years—which naturally made him feel that he had a right to borrow money of me.

"One day I noticed that the fat woman looked a good deal smaller round the waist than usual, and I charged her with lacing. At first she denied it, but I told her it was

no use, and that she couldn't deceive me, and then she admitted that she was wearing a corset. 'What's got into you?' I asked her. 'Haven't you no sense, and no pride in your profession? Here you are actually trying to make yourself look smaller than you are, when you know perfectly well that you ought to be trying to do just the opposite. I tell you what it is, Melinda, you've got your eye on some young man, and want to make yourself look pretty.'

"'And what if I do?' said she. 'Do you think that a fat woman hasn't got any feelings? I'm a woman, if I do weigh three hundred pounds, and I've got a woman's feelings, though none of you men ever seem to think so.' I told her that there wasn't any question about her feelings, and that I had no concern with anything but her

weight, and that if she began to lose flesh she couldn't expect me to stick to the contract. 'Just put all this foolishness out of your mind,' I said, 'and try to work yourself up to four hundred pounds. That's an ambition worthy of a sensible woman, while this hyer falling in love is only fit for women who haven't got brains or flesh to earn their own living.'

"But my advice was wasted, as advice always is, and in a few days the fat woman came to me and asked to be let off her contract, so that she could be married and go to keeping house for her husband. It made me mad to see her so willing to throw away her future, and so careless about my interests, considering that I had treated her kindly and liberally, and I told her that I should hold her to her contract, which had two years more to

run, and would sue her for damages if she left me, or if she neglected to keep herself up to her usual weight. This made her pretty angry, and she said that she should do as she pleased, and that I was a horrid brute. So I saw that I was going to have trouble with her.

“That night the fat woman had a long talk with her admirer after the performance was over, and for the next day or two was in such good spirits that I knew she must mean mischief. The fact was that the fellow had induced her to agree to elope with him, and she felt so sure that her professional career was coming to a happy end that she openly took to drinking vinegar and eating meat, and drew in her waist till she looked as if she was on the edge of apoplexy.

“The fat woman’s room was just over mine, and, naturally, she

couldn't move around much without waking me, though I am a pretty middling sound sleeper. Soon after she had taken to vinegar, I was waked up one night by hearing her walking about her room in her boots, and, as my watch said it was two o'clock, I knew something was up. By-and-by she came downstairs as softly as she could, though the stairs did groan as stairs will when you put three hundred pounds of woman on them in the middle of the night. I got up and looked out of the window, and there was a carriage standing by the stage door. I saw the fat woman's little game at once. She was going to run away with the ticket speculator.

"My first thought was to dress and run out and stop her, but presently I remembered how narrow the stage door was, and I made up

my mind to wait and see the fun, my window being where it commanded a good view of the scene of action. Just as I anticipated, the fat woman halted when she came to the stage door, and presently I heard her call, in a low voice: 'Tom, come and help me; I'm stuck in the door!' Tom climbed down out of the carriage, and, getting a good hold of the fat woman's arms, braced himself against the jamb of the door and pulled his level best. But he couldn't start her, and, though she stood it like a heroine, she had to tell him, after he had pulled a while, that she couldn't stand it any longer.

"Then Tom tried to push her back into the corridor, so that she could take a fresh start and maybe get herself through the door edge-wise, but he couldn't budge her.

So the two whispered together a while, and then Tom called the driver of the carriage to come and help him. The driver was the most intelligent of the lot, and he said that the only way to get the



Pulled his level best.

lady loose was for Tom to climb over her and then push from the inside while the driver pulled from the outside. It didn't seem to be an easy job for Tom to climb over her, but he managed to do it,

though she screamed a little when his boots sunk into her shoulders. Then I heard him say, 'Now, driver, while you pull I'll try running the length of the corridor and bumping her. The shock may loosen her if you pull just as I bump.' I don't know how the fat woman liked it, but she held her tongue, and after a while something gave way, and she suddenly shot out into the road, falling on the driver, and making him think his last end had come. When he got himself free, and he and Tom together had set the fat woman on her legs again, I heard him say: 'I'll have to be after charging you, sor, for a suit of clothes, being as my own is spoilt entirely, and my left arm is sprained.' But Tom told him to hurry up and help boost the fat woman into the carriage, and he'd see that everything was

made right when the time came to pay.

"You may ask why I didn't interfere about this time and keep the woman from running away. Because I knew just what her weight was, and how much the bottom of an ordinary carriage will bear, and I wanted to see how the thing would end.

"Well, it ended just as I knew it would. It was the middle of summer, and daylight began about three o'clock, so Tom was in a hurry to get away before anybody would see him and recognize him or his companion. He and the driver gave the fat woman a most everlasting boost and shot her into the carriage, and Tom was going to get in after her when I heard something crack, and the fat woman gave a dismal yell. She had gone clean through the bot-

tom of the carriage, and was standing with her feet on the road, with the broken pieces of the flooring holding her so tight that she couldn't stir. She gave up all pretence of keeping quiet, and called out at the top of her voice for the driver to hold the horses and keep the carriage from moving; and she begged Tom, if he had any love for her, to help her out of the carriage, and let her get into her own room once more.

"The fact is, the woman was in a very bad fix. The splinters must have hurt her like so many knives, and the more Tom tried to pull away the broken boards, the more they got their work in. Then, all of a sudden, the horses took it into their heads to start, and the woman yelled that they were killing her, and the driver cut them loose instantly.

"By the time the horses were unhitched Tom had given up the attempt to get the woman loose as a bad job, and was standing in a helpless sort of way by the carriage door, telling her for Heaven's sake to hold her tongue before she waked up the whole neighborhood.

"I judged it was about time for me to take a hand in the proceedings, so I called out of the window, 'Melinda! If you've had enough of this yer foolishness, just say the word, and I'll come down with an ax and help you out of your fix.' She said all she wanted was to be let loose, and she would never try to leave me again, not for any man, let alone a cruel, heartless wretch that would stand by and see a woman suffer, and never lift a finger to help her. So I dressed slow and easy, so as to let the splinters sink into her mind, as you

might say, and keep her from forgetting all she owed me, and then I got my ax and came down and broke her out without much trouble. Tom had nothing to say for himself. I will give him the credit of admitting that he stood around while I was working with the ax, till he saw that the woman was loose, and then he bolted, thinking, perhaps, that I might be disposed to use the ax on him, which would have been a waste of labor that I shouldn't have thought of undertaking. The driver tackled up his horses in no time, and started after Tom as hard as he could drive, knowing that his chance of collecting payment would be middling small if he let Tom fairly out of his sight.

"The fat woman was a good deal tore up with the splinters, and more or less exhausted by the men-

tal strain she had gone through while the two men were trying to haul her through the stage door. She hadn't much strength left for conversation, and she went very quietly with me round to the front of the house and through the big door up to her room. When she was going into her room she turned and said:

“‘Colonel, I'll never do it again, and I'll do my best to fatten up after this.’

“‘That's all right,’ said I. ‘You just go to bed again and forget all about it. We're all liable to make mistakes, and it wasn't your fault that you didn't know how much a floor of a carriage would bear. I'll send you up the arnica, and just you use it and forget all about Tom, who is no good anyway, and who'll never come round you

again, you can bet your bottom dollar.'

"After that you never saw a more faithful and conscientious artist than that fat woman. She dieted herself more carefully than ever, and before the year was out she had got up to three hundred and forty pounds."

The N'Shugie-Gumbo.

"From what you have told me," I said to the doorkeeper, "I gather that 'freaks,' as a rule, are not overburdened with brains."

"There ain't brains enough in an ordinary dime museum, all put together, to fit out even a member of Congress. Why, if you could take the brains of all my company, barring the dwarf's, and put them in the skull of a second-rate temperance orator, you'd find that they'd rattle round like dried peas. You see, 'freaks' make their living by careful cultivation of their bodies. Naturally, their minds are

no sort of use to them. What's the good of a mind to a fat woman? What she requires to succeed in her profession is flesh, not intellect. It's the same way with all the rest of them, excepting the lightning calculator, and even he needs 'cheek' more than he does mind.

"Of course," continued the door-keeper, "there's exceptions to every rule. Now, my dwarf is as bright a chap as you can find in any newspaper office in the country, and it is my experience that the smartest class of men we have are the newspaper reporters. I never try to fool a reporter. If I see one coming into my show I just open a bottle of wine for him, and I say, 'You'll see that the gorilla, or maybe the fat woman, isn't quite according to the small bills; but strange coincidences will happen in this world, and if you shouldn't

give me away, and if you should receive a ten-dollar bill in an anonymous letter the next day, it would



A Bright Chap.

be a coincidence that would be pleasant as well as improving for all concerned.' I never yet had a re-

porter prove himself unworthy of my confidence. They are a high-minded, honorable class, provided you pay up handsomely, and never deceive them.

“But I was going to tell you about my dwarf. He is about forty years old, as I should judge, and he has spent the best part of his life in inventing things. Some of his inventions are useful ones, and he holds two or three patents that have involved him in a lot of law-suits and cost him no end of money, which, as everybody knows, is what a successful invention always does. He was working at one time on a patent umbrella gun and shield, which he expected would be adopted by every army in the world, and would make him a millionaire half-a-dozen times over. His first idea was to make a combined umbrella and sword-cane. He made



Useful for keeping off the rain.

an umbrella with a stout handle, and fitted the handle with a sword, which, when it was thrown out by a spring, projected about two feet from the end of the stick.

“Well! he saw after a while that the only way this weapon could be used was by treating it like a gun with a fixed bayonet, so he modified his sword by turning it into a regular sword bayonet. Then it occurred to him that if he turned the umbrella stick into a rifle he would have a better weapon still, so he substituted a Remington rifle for his umbrella stick, and fitted an ordinary umbrella frame to it. What he really had at this stage of the proceedings was a rifle with an umbrella attachment. It was useful for keeping off the rain, provided any one wanted to carry such a heavy weight; but, as I told him one day when he was

showing the model to me, most people would prefer an umbrella weighing less than sixteen pounds.

"The next thing he did with that invention was to make his umbrella shot-proof. This was, according to him, the biggest invention since the invention of firearms. His idea was that a regiment of soldiers armed with his umbrella could advance on the enemy, firing as they advanced, and sheltering themselves behind their umbrellas so that it wouldn't be possible for them to get hit, except, perhaps, in the lower part of the leg. He was so sure that he had made the greatest invention of the age that he got pretty angry with me when I asked him what material he calculated to make his umbrella out of. 'Steel,' said he. 'Thin steel; just thick enough to resist a rifle bullet.' 'And how are you going to shut

your steel umbrella when it ain't in use?' says I. 'Colonel!' says he, very dignified, and mad enough to try his rifle on me, 'if you'll attend to your part of this yer show, I'll attend to mine.'

"Well, that dwarf worked at that invention for more than a year. He managed to make a steel umbrella that would shut up after a fashion, but it weighed about a hundred pounds. Then he tried making his umbrella of steel chain-work, like the sort of old armor those chaps in the Crusades used to wear, but it weighed almost as much as the solid steel, and then it let in water like a sieve, and was of no sort of use as an umbrella against the rain.

"Of course, this didn't suit him, so he covered his chain-armor with rubber-cloth and made a small hole in it near the top, with a trap-door

to open and shut, so as a soldier could take aim through it when the umbrella was open. But he wasn't satisfied yet, and that invention kept on growing. The dwarf made an extension of canvas to button on to the sides of the umbrella, so as to make a tent of the whole affair. All you had to do was to button on this extension, and then dig a hole in the ground for the butt of the gun. When you had planted the gun in this hole, and opened the umbrella and pegged it down all round, you had a first-class circular tent.

"By this time the thing had got to weigh so much that no man could have carried it on a march, but the dwarf fitted a wheel on to the muzzle of the gun, so that the thing could be wheeled like a wheelbarrow. When he had put hooks on to the under side of the

gun for a knapsack and a haversack, and a cartridge-box, and a blanket, and all the rest of a man's kit, he considered that the invention was about complete. But he couldn't get the government or anybody else to do anything but laugh at it, so he finally gave it up as a bad job, and worked off his steel umbrella frames on the fat woman as the latest style of crinoline. But all this goes to show that the dwarf was a person with intellects into him. I can't say much for his morals, or his temper, but there is no doubt that he did have brains.

"He came to me one day about two years ago and said, 'Colonel, I understand that all your monkeys are dead.' You see, I had taken a cage of six monkeys from a friend of mine who was in the menagerie line in payment of a bad debt, and

the monkeys had proved a strong attraction while they lasted. However, the climate finished them after a while, as it always will do, and all that was left of them was the big empty cage.

“‘You know well enough the monkeys are dead,’ says I to the dwarf. ‘But what’s that to you? They weren’t any relation of yours, so far as I know.’

“‘How would you like a first-class trained orang-outang?’ says the dwarf. ‘One that could smoke, and let on to read a newspaper, and do all them sort of tricks?’

“‘Are you thinking of applying for the place?’ I asked, not feeling in particularly good temper myself that morning, for something, I forget what, had gone wrong with me.

“‘Just so,’ says he. ‘I’ve studied up the monkey business since you

had those monkeys here, and I can do it as well as the best of them. Come along to the cage, and I'll show you something.'

"I went along with him, and when we got to the cage the dwarf pulls off his shoes and stockings, and jumps up against the side of the cage, clutching the bars with his hands and feet at the same time, just as a monkey would do. Then he chatters, and makes a grab for my watch chain, and would have got it, too, if I hadn't jumped back pretty spry.

"'How do I do it?' asked the dwarf.

"'Better than the other monkeys,' said I.

"'Well!' says he; 'I'm ready to be an orang-outang in the afternoon and a dwarf at night, if you'll double my salary. That is, as soon as I get my tail perfected.'

“‘What are you giving us?’ said I. ‘Orang-outangs don’t have no tails.’

“‘This here one does,’ said the



Discovered

dwarf, ‘and it’s going to be a practicable tail, too. I have been working at it for the last week, and I shall have it after a bit in such a

state that I can hook it around a chandelier and swing head downwards. That will convince the public that I am genuine. It's easy enough to dress up like any animal, except an elephant, or maybe a camelopard, but it's the tail that always gives a man away. And if you don't have a tail, people will think that you shirked it because you knew you were playing a game on them, and couldn't succeed if you put on a tail. Now, my tail will be the very thing that will convince the public that they are looking at a real orang-outang, and not at a Chinaman, like your last gorilla.'

"'You might be a new sort of monkey discovered by Stanley in Central Africa, and sent over to me as a special testimonial of friendship,' says I, for I was beginning to think that the little

man's idea was a good one. 'You get up a practicable tail, and a good general disguise, and I'll agree to your terms and maybe do something better still.' So it was agreed that as soon as the dwarf could invent a satisfactory tail, he should be brought out as a learned ape.

"That tail was one of the best things the dwarf ever invented. It was made of steel, with no end of joints, and was about as flexible as the real article. It was contrived so that whenever the dwarf took a turn with it around anything, it would keep its hold till he released it by touching a spring somewhere about his waist. His general make-up was superb. He wasn't content with just putting on a skin, and painting his face a little, but he padded himself here and there, and wore a flexible mask

that was twice as ugly and just as probable as any monkey's face you ever saw. When he first showed himself to me in this get-up I saw at once that he was going to be a big success, and when he hooked his tail over the strong woman's horizontal bar, and swung head downwards, and chattered and cussed in the monkey dialect, there wasn't a scientific chap in all Chicago, to say nothing of a regular menagerie sharp, who could have supposed that he wasn't genuine.

"What, with drawing two salaries, and having a fair opportunity to play tricks on the public, the dwarf was a middling happy man. There was always a crowd round his cage, and nobody seemed to read the notices warning the people not to go within reach of the N'Shugie-Gumbo, which was the name a friend of mine, who had

read a lot about Central Africa, gave him. The dwarf would sit and look at the people in the sol-



Swung head downward.

emnest kind of way for a few minutes, and then he would come to the front of the cage and put his

arm through the bars to shake hands.

"Everybody would want to shake hands with him, and presently he would get a chance to snatch a woman's bonnet. He would haul it through the bars, and then he would hook his tail over a horizontal bar that was in the cage, and swing comfortably while he pulled the bonnet into shreds. Of course, the woman would yell, but everybody else would be delighted, and the dwarf, having a natural love for malicious mischief, would be as happy as they make 'em. Then he would lay for spectacles, and if any man or woman wearing glasses came inside his reach, he would snatch their glasses and break them in bits before they could fairly realize what was the matter.

"Occasionally, when a man lost a pair of gold spectacles, he would

appeal to me, and I would go into the cage with a whip, and make the monkey disgorge, which he always did after making sure that he had bent them up about as far as they could be bent.

“Then, in addition to his fun, the dwarf had lots of candy and apples and such given to him, and what he didn’t eat on the spot he used to hide under a blanket in the corner till the show was over. As for cigars, he used to get the best part of a box every day. The people were just wild to see him smoke, and they said he did it just like a human being. He used to smoke pretty near the whole afternoon, and when the show closed he would have a double handful of cigars to carry to his room. All the other ‘freaks’ were raging with envy at his good luck, and, being, as I said, naturally vicious, this only made

him the happier. Nobody outside of my establishment had the least idea that N'Shugie-Gumbo wasn't a genuine Central African monkey, and a scientific chap belonging to the Chicago University wrote a paper about him to show that he was a missing lynx, which, to my mind, showed how big an idiot a scientific chap can be, for the dwarf wasn't missing, and he wasn't the least bit like a lynx.

"He was climbing into his cage one afternoon, just before the show opened, and as I was passing by I asked him how things were going with him.

" 'I don't feel easy about that tail,' says he. 'It don't work altogether right. Yesterday, when I had it hooked round the bar I couldn't get it loose again for about half-an-hour, and was afraid I should have to call for help, which

would have been the ruin of me. I've examined it, and I can't find anything the matter with it. I suppose it's just the cussedness of the spring, that'll work sometimes, and sometimes it won't. I'm a little afraid that it'll get me into a scrape yet before this thing is played out.'

"I remembered these remarks afterward, for they seemed to be sort of prophetic, as you might say. That very afternoon the tail failed to do its work, and the dwarf's experience as a monkey had to be brought to a close. My own idea is that the tail needed to be oiled, or else that the spring had got bent in some way. Anyway, it got the dwarf into the worst trouble that he ever got into while he was with me.

"It happened in the course of the afternoon, when the house was

pretty full, and there was a big crowd round the monkey's cage, that the dwarf accidentally let his tail slip through the bars and hang down where the people could reach it. There was a woman standing close to the cage, and she thought it would be smart to take hold of the end of the tail and give it a pull. Accordingly, she did so, and the minute she took the tail in her hand, it curled round her wrist, and there she was, held fast. As I told you, the tail acted automatically, and whatever it took hold it held onto till the dwarf touched the spring that released it.

"Of course, as soon as the dwarf saw what was up, he tried to let go his hold of the woman's hand, but the spring wouldn't work, and the woman began to get frightened, and cried for help. Two or three men came to her assistance, and

tried their level best to untwist the tail, but it was made of the best steel, and they couldn't do anything with it. Then, seeing that the woman was half frightened to death,



Curled round her wrist.

a man pulled out a knife and started in to cut the monkey's tail off. He hadn't more than turned the edge of his knife on the steel, and cut his own fingers when another

man—a big fellow, who had something to do with the Society for Prevention of Cruelty, fetched him one under the ear that laid him out, remarking as he did so, in a quiet way, that there wasn't going to be no cruelty to no animals while he was on hand.

“All this time the dwarf was fumbling away, trying to make the spring work, and so get his tail loose before anything serious should happen. It wasn't long before it did happen. The big man who was opposed to cruelty to animals said that all that was needed to make the monkey listen to reason was firmness and gentleness, and that if any one would pull steadily on the tail the monkey would be glad to let the woman loose. Accordingly, he laid hold of the tail, and two or three other chaps laid hold of it, too, just to

show how anxious they were to help the poor woman. A gentle pull didn't have any effect on the monkey, except to haul him tight up against the bars, and the man who had been knocked down for trying to use his knife began to relieve his feelings by getting the big man by the collar, and trying to pull him backward. What with hanging onto the tail so as to keep himself on his feet, and what with being a little excited, the big man pulled harder than he meant to, and the men that were helping him pulled their heaviest.

"The long and short of it was that the tail, which had never been built to stand such a strain, gave way, and most of the public that were standing close to the cage went down on the floor in a heap.

"When the big man got up, wav-

ing the tail in the air, with its leather fastenings and buckles and such in plain sight, the dwarf knew that it was all up with the N'Shugie-Gumbo. In similar circumstances an audience generally cleans out the establishment, and that is what would probably have happened on this occasion, if it hadn't been that a free fight was going on among the men that had been knocked over when the tail gave way, and they had no time to attend to serious things. I called in a couple of policemen and had the whole lot arrested for breach of the peace, and, it being by that time about the hour for closing, I induced everybody to leave by offering them their money back. You can bet I felt relieved when the last man had gone, for, if the crowd had undertook to clean out the place they

would have killed the dwarf for certain.

“‘I don’t so much mind giving up the monkey business,’ said the dwarf to me that evening, ‘for I was beginning to get tired of it; but I do hate to quit without ever having got hold of a wig. I’ve had more than thirty bonnets, and fifteen spectacles, but I’ve never been able to grab any man’s wig, though I’ve come near it two or three times. Well, I suppose we can’t have everything here to please us. I’ve had a good time while it lasted, and I suppose I ought to be satisfied. But I should like to have stole just one wig.’

“He was the most intelligent ‘freak’ I ever knew, and that steel tail of his was a mighty smart invention; but I told him that, after considering all things, I should ex-

pect him to stick to the legitimate, and should refuse to give my sanction to any more plans for deluding the public, seeing as they are nearly always failures in the long run."

A Gorilla Romance.

The doorkeeper threw himself into one of the large armchairs of the smoking-room of the Palmer House, which, as every one knows, is the chief hotel of Chicago, and one of the objects of which no stranger can speak disrespectfully to a Chicago man and live. He wiped his brow with his enormous yellow silk handkerchief, and ordered the waiter to bring him some whisky. As he was ordinarily a total abstainer, it was evident that something very unusual had happened to disturb the even current of the doorkeeper's habits, and I asked him what was the matter.

"If you'd been up to my museum an hour ago, you wouldn't have asked what was the matter. You'd have seen for yourself the biggest row I've struck since I've been running a dime museum in this town, and I've been here now going on five years."

"How did it happen?" I asked.

"It didn't happen. It was the natural consequence of my cussed soft-heartedness. That's what's stood in my light ever since I went into business for myself. Never you do a kind action—that is, unless you're a millionaire and don't have to depend on your own exertions for a living. What's that song the Sunday-school children sing?—'Kind words can never die!' That's just what's the matter with them. They keep alive, and keep a getting even with you all the rest of your life. Why, I'd have been a

rich man twenty times over if I'd had sense enough to be a little less darned benevolent.

"About three weeks ago a chap from California—so he said—came to see me in my office, and wanted a situation as a gorilla. He was ragged and thin, and said that he was starving. When I asked him if he'd had any experience as a gorilla, he was honest enough to say that he hadn't, but he said he had been a conductor on a Chicago street car, and he calculated that the gorilla business would come middling easy to him. Well! I couldn't help feeling sorry for him, and then I knew that a good gorilla is one of the strongest attractions a dime museum can have. I hadn't any gorilla, for the last one I had died of delirium tremens, and I was waiting till I could find one who was a blue-ribbon man. I asked

the man if he was a steady drinker, or only a periodical drinker, and he swore that he had never touched a drop of whisky in his life, and had a medal at the pawnbroker's that John B. Gough had hung around his neck with his own hands. I was fool enough to believe this, though I know as well as anybody else that a Californian who says he never drinks is only saving up his thirst till it gets good and strong, and then just you look out for him. I hired that fellow then and there, and had him measured for a suit of gorilla skins that very afternoon.

"He took to the business quite naturally, and as I had a good, comfortable cage made for him, he led a pretty easy life. He enjoyed pulling off women's bonnets when they came too near his cage, and the other women who had the sense to keep outside of his reach said it

was just too sweet for anything to see the solemn way in which the poor dear beast would sit and pull those vulgar, ridiculous bonnets to pieces. After the show closed, and the gorilla had got his skin off, and washed the paint off his face and hands, he would sit down with the other freaks and make himself generally popular, being in the main a good-tempered chap, with a lot of good stories, and two or three pretty good songs.

“There was one of our company that didn’t like the gorilla, and nothing he could do would make her admit that there was any good in him. This was the combined female contortionist and strongest woman in the world. She was genuine, and corresponded in every particular to the small bills, which is more than you can rightly expect in any show. To see her standing

on her head and balancing the dwarf on one foot and the living skeleton on the other, was a sight to draw tears from the eyes of any one that knows what real genius is. Then you should have seen her hold the fat woman in her teeth. She would stand on a raised platform, and after a belt was fastened round the fat woman's waist, she would take it in her teeth and swing her clear of the floor. The fat woman's weight was genuine, too, for she wore a lead corset to bring her up to seven hundred pounds, she being naturally plump and weighing a good one hundred and fifty without her pads and her corset. She was a good girl, too, was the strongest woman, and her whole soul was in her profession. She didn't want to get married, nor any such nonsense, and she used to say that she had rather be

able to balance the fat woman on her feet, she standing on her head at the time, than to be married to Russell Sage, and have him die the next day. That was what she was trying to work up to, you understand—the balancing of the fat woman on both feet—same as she balanced the dwarf and the living skeleton; and I believe that she would have fetched it in time. What she will do now nobody knows, and he won't tell.

“The living skeleton had never seemed to care for anything but his meals, he being a most tremendous eater, like most of his sort. That's the way living skeletons are educated. Feed them on nothing but meat, and keep feeding them about once in every three hours, and you'll turn out as many living skeletons as the market can hold. He had been with me going on for

seven years, and had never showed the least grain of interest in any woman; but his time had come at last. He fell in love with the strongest woman, and he had it mighty bad. 'It's all on account of that balancing act,' he said to me. 'The very first time I sat on the sole of her foot and she stood on her head, so calm and sweet and like a first-class regular angel, I knew it was all up with me. I don't care for my meals no more, compared with what I used to, and if I can't win her love I know I shall grow fat and choke to death, like that genuine fat boy we had last year.'

"I tried to get at the strongest woman's views about the skeleton, and I didn't have much difficulty about it. She said he was a nice, quiet, gentlemanly person, and if she was a marrying woman she might think seriously about him.

“‘As it is,’ she said, ‘I am wedded to my profession, and I won’t marry any man, at least not while I am before the public. I’ll be a sister to him, if that’ll suit him, but he had better forget me and take care of himself. I’m very much afraid it is telling on him, and he is gaining flesh.’

“Now, the gorilla, being sweet on the strongest woman himself, and she hating him as the devil does soda water, as the saying is, grew sulky. He took to getting angry at what the public said about him, and when a man would say, ‘What a horrid, ugly beast he is, to be sure,’ the gorilla would want to talk back at him, though, of course, he had sense enough not to do it. However, I began to get uneasy, for I was afraid that the gorilla would take to drink, and do something that would create a scandal.

or that he would break out into language, and slang the public till they would lose confidence not only in him, but in all the rest of the show. The fat woman, who sat next to him at the table, was a good deal worried, too, for she was afraid of him, and, as she afterward told me, was always expecting to see him try to ease his mind on the living skeleton, of whom he was naturally jealous. The poor woman, who was as kind-hearted a soul as ever lived, was so taken up with the affair that she could think of nothing else, and often she would forget to scream when a boy would stick a pin into her ankle, which, of course, led to doubts as to her genuineness.

“The gorilla was always saying aggravating things to the skeleton; which was contemptible, seeing as the skeleton was as weak as a cat

and had nothing of the fighting man about him. When I overheard anything of the kind, I, of course, gave the gorilla my views on his conduct, and warned him that I would discharge him if he made trouble in my happy family; but for all that I saw the day was coming when he would be sure to break out, and I more than half made up my mind to discharge him without waiting for any outbreak. But there again my cursed benevolence stood in my way, and I couldn't quite bring myself to discharge a really efficient gorilla, just because he didn't happen to like the living skeleton. Well, the crisis was bound to come, as a crisis always does, except, of course, it has something to do with politics. This morning the gorilla went out early and bought a bottle of whisky and smuggled it into his cage, where he

hid it under the straw. He would go and take a hack at it every half-hour or so, and when the show opened he was about as full as he could hold.

“At first the public didn’t notice anything peculiar, and probably thought that the gorilla had been fed pretty well, and was in unusually good spirits. The fact was that he was fighting drunk, and was cussin’ the public to himself in a way that would have led to somebody’s getting insulted and drawing on him if he had been understood. By and by a fat, big, stupid-looking politician came along, and, after standing a while in front of the gorilla’s cage, remarked to a friend that the gorilla was almost as ugly as a nigger, and he wondered he didn’t have a place on the republican general committee. The gorilla happened to be a democrat

of the p'isonest kind, and to be compared to a nigger, and called a republican all at once, was more than he could stand. He shook his fist through the bars of his cage at the man and said, 'Look here! if you're man enough to take off your coat, I'll smash the ugly face off you with all the pleasure in life!' The man was so much astonished to hear the gorilla speak that at first it took his breath away, but, being a fighter from 'way back, as an active politician has got to be, he said, after about a minute: 'Come out of that cage, you dirty beast, and we'll see who is the better mon.' With that the gorilla threw away the stick he always carried, pretending that he needed it to help him stand upright, and opened the door of his cage and jumped down.

"I wasn't there at the start, and

they tell me that I missed one of the prettiest fights that Chicago ever saw. The politician kept his end up middling well, but the gorilla was too much for him, and in three rounds knocked him clean out. By that time the excitement was tremendous—the women were screaming and fainting and making for the door all at once, and the men were trying to get in the front of the ring, and betting on the gorilla or the politician, according as their best judgment dictated, and yelling with as much enthusiasm as if they were attending a political convention. When the gorilla had finished his man he asked if any other gentleman would like to step forward, but nobody seemed to want to take a hand, so the gorilla judged that the time had come for him to attend to his private interests, and get square with the living

skeleton. He made straight for the platform where the freaks were sitting, and went for that skeleton as if there were no hereafter for either of them. After he had offered to knock the skeleton's head off for two cents, and had his offer declined, he reached for him, but the fat woman gave a shriek, and waddling between them, fell on the gorilla and floored him. The crowd cheered, and for a minute the betting on the fat woman and the gorilla was about even, but he managed to get on his feet again, and, owing to the fat woman's having torn a hole in her stocking during the struggle, her bran began to flow, and, before she could get to the dressing-room, she was reduced to her natural size, and her reputation was gone forever.

"The coast being now clear, the gorilla grabbed the skeleton by the

waistband and was going to heave him clean across the room, when the strongest woman walks up to him, and, without saying a word, gives him one in the right eye, straight from the shoulder. It knocked him off the platform, and when he pulled himself together and got on his legs again, he was the most astonished gorilla you ever dreamed of. However, seeing as he was fighting drunk, he wasn't going to be contented with one flooring. He climbed on the platform again and went for the skeleton a second time, but the strongest woman was there before him. She took him by the collar of his skin and his right leg, and giving him a gentle swing, so as to get the heft of him, you understand, she hove him about thirty feet straight through the air. He brought up against the side of his

cage, and when some gentlemen, desiring to see the thing out, picked him up and sponged him off, he said he had had enough. About



A most astonished gorilla.

half of his ribs, I should judge, was stove in, and he's in the hospital this very minute.

"I arrived just as they were picking him up, and as soon as I knew

how things stood I made the people a speech. I asked them if, as honest men and gentlemen, they could deny that they had had their full money's worth; and they owned that they had. I said: 'Gentlemen! there's tricks in every trade, and I don't pretend to say that my gorilla and my fat woman are not to a certain extent works of art. But tell me in what other show you ever saw such a heavenly fight, and such a magnificent display of the beauty, nobility and purity of woman?'

"Well, they were pretty middling sensible people, I will give them that much credit, and they agreed that they had no reason to be dissatisfied, and after talking the fight over for a while, and taking up a collection for the strongest woman, which panned out more than thirty dollars, they left, giving

three cheers for the strongest woman and for me.

“I consider that I am well out of a bad scrape, but for all that my losses this day have been pretty heavy. I’ve lost my gorilla, and, what is worse, the public has lost confidence in gorillas, and I shan’t be able to exhibit another for at least a year. Then the fat woman’s reputation is gone, and she can never show again in Chicago until people have forgotten her and she has changed her name. Besides, I shall have to get a genuine fat woman to take her place, and they come high, there not being enough of them to supply the demand. Taking one thing with another, I calculate that this day’s work will cost me, in the course of the year, not less than three hundred dollars, not including the cost of buying the gorilla’s remains, if it comes to

that, as it probably will. If ever you go into the show business, you take my advice and never have anything to do with an American gorilla, no matter what State he comes from. Get a good sober German. They make the best and the most reliable gorillas in the profession."

A Case of Dual Consciousness.

“Of course,” said the doorkeeper, “we calculate, in the dime museum business, to deceive the public a little now and then, but as it is done for the amusement and instruction of the public, I don’t see as anyone has any call to complain. Suppose I do exhibit a ‘freak’ that isn’t quite genuine! If it draws, it is because the public likes it, in which case the public ought to be satisfied. If it doesn’t draw, the public doesn’t pay out any money to see it, and naturally doesn’t feel that it is swindled. Now, I was swindled once, and pretty bad, too, by an

artificial 'freak,' and it was me and not the public that suffered. If you want to hear about it I'll tell you the whole story, though I shouldn't like it to be known in the profession, for it don't do any credit to me as a professional man.

"I was exhibiting in Boston a good many years ago, and I am free to say that I was losing money. Boston don't seem to care for natural 'freaks.' It goes in for philosophical and philanthropic 'freaks.' I've nothing against that style of 'freak' myself, but I claim that a genuine giant, or a real fat woman, is just as improving, and a sight more interesting, than any philosopher or philanthropist that Boston ever produced.

"I don't like to lose money any more than you do, and things were looking pretty blue for me, when one day a carriage drives up to my

door and a chap sends in word that he wanted to see me on professional business. I told my man to show him in, and when I saw him I put him down for a rascal without waiting to hear him speak. He told me that he had just arrived from Europe with a two-headed girl, and that she was the biggest thing that any museum had ever offered to the public. He had her with him in the carriage, and I was the first manager that he had called to see since he landed.

“Now, I knew well enough that a two-headed girl is about the scarcest thing that a museum can get hold of. I never knew of but one specimen of the kind, and she was worth pretty near her weight in gold. How this fellow should have got hold of a second specimen without my ever having heard of her existence was more than I

could understand, for I kept as bright a look-out for attractions all over the world as Barnum himself. However, I went out to the carriage and had a look at the girl. There she sat, wrapped up in a big shawl, and, as far as I could see, she was all right. Anyway, there were two heads above the edge of the shawl, and they were as pretty heads as you could find in any young ladies' seminary. If the two-headed girl only corresponded to the sample I saw in the carriage, she would be the biggest attraction that Boston or any other city had ever seen.

"Well! I went back to my office, and the fellow and I talked the thing over. He said the girl was a Laplander, and couldn't speak a single word of any language except Laplandish. She was sixteen years old, and had never been out of her

native village until he had accidentally seen her, and hired her for a five years' tour of the world. So



Smiled at me with both heads.

far he had not exhibited her anywhere, and he wanted her to make her debut in my show, so as to give her a respectable standing in

the profession, from the start. His terms were a hundred dollars a week, and a benefit every six months, and he said that he should ask any other manager a hundred and twenty-five.

"I told him to bring in his girl where I could have a fair look at her, and then it would be time enough to talk about terms. He brought her in, and I noticed that she climbed down out of the carriage with considerable difficulty. The agent helped her into my office, where she sat down on the sofa, and smiled at me with both heads in a way that would have been dangerous if she had tried it on some managers that I know.

"'There she is,' said the agent. 'The only genuine white two-headed girl the world has ever seen. Above the waist, where she is joined together, she is perfect; two

distinct girls, and good-looking ones, too. She's only got one pair of legs, which prevents her from walking easy, but she is as strong and healthy as they make 'em, and there ain't the least danger that she'll die on your hands.'

"Then he spoke some gibberish, which I supposed was Laplandish, to the girl, and she drew up the hem of her dress so as to show two nice little feet, and no more. The size of those feet ought to have awakened my suspicion, for they were the regulation Boston size, which is about three sizes smaller than the average European foot. But I was so anxious to find that she was genuine that I didn't notice that there was anything wrong about her feet.

"'What do you say?' said the agent. 'Isn't she a first-class attraction?'

“‘She’ll draw safe enough,’ said I, ‘provided she’s genuine. I don’t mean to say she ain’t, but I’ve got to be sure about it before we can do any business.’

“‘Oh! It’s easy enough to prove that she is genuine,’ says the fellow. ‘I’ve got certificates from three of the leading physicians in Lapland, besides the affidavit of her father and mother and the parish priest. If they don’t satisfy you, nothing will, and I shall have to take her to another manager.’

“‘Show me the certificates!’ said I.

“Well! he produced them on the spot, and they seemed all right. Of course I couldn’t read a word of them, but they had a lot of sealing-wax on them, which is always convincing, and had a genuine official look. I wanted the girl so bad that, perhaps, it led me to be a

little careless for once in my life; so I said to the agent that I would give him twenty-five dollars a week and sign a contract with him for a year. We argued the matter for about an hour, and finally we came to an agreement on the basis of seventy-five dollars a week and three benefits a year. It was the steepest price I ever paid, but I was losing money at the rate of fifty dollars a week, and I was ready to take almost any chance of bringing up the business again. Besides, I knew that if the two-headed girl didn't draw I should be ruined anyhow, and it didn't matter what I might agree to pay, as there would be no money to pay it with. Whereas, if she did draw, as I expected she would, I could easily afford to pay seventy-five dollars a week for her. I always did go on the principle of dealing liberally

with people, especially when it is clear that there is nothing to be lost by it.

“While the agent and I were trying to get the best of one another the two-headed girl sat with some of her arms around both her necks, and was that patient and sweet-tempered in appearance that I began to hope that for once I had found a ‘freak’ that wouldn’t be perpetually quarreling. As I have told you, I presume, ‘freaks’ do nothing but quarrel and fall in love. I don’t wonder at their quarreling, seeing that they are shut up together day and night, and haven’t anything else to do; but it was a long time before I found out why they are constantly falling in love. It is because they didn’t get any exercise, except now and then a drive in a closed carriage.

“You never hear of a trapeze

performer or a strong man falling in love; that's because they work off their affections on their muscles. On the other hand, a fat woman, who never gets any exercise at all, is always in love, and generally two or three deep. Naturally, the more 'freaks' fall in love the more they quarrel, and there is hardly a day that I don't have to smooth two or three of them down, or threaten to lock them up till they quit heaving candlesticks and language at one another.

"Well, I advertised my two-headed girl the next day, and when night came the house was packed. Ralph Waldo Emerson himself couldn't have drawn better. The very best classes of Boston society came to see the two-headed girl, and more women with more spectacles and more false teeth came into the show than I had ever seen

before in my whole professional experience. The men and women used to stand by the hour in front of the sofa where the two-headed girl sat and argue about her soul, which, considering that her soul wasn't on exhibition, seemed to me a loss of time. They made out in some way that I don't pretend to understand, that the girl had something to do with philosophy, and that her two heads proved something or other that Mr. Emerson used to teach.

"You've heard of Mr. Emerson, of course. He was what they called a philosopher, and drew better than any 'freak' or primer donner that ever visited Boston. I couldn't see anything in him myself. I went to hear him lecture once, and it seemed to me that he wasn't to be compared with Artemus Ward. However, that was none of my business,

though at one time I did think of making him a handsome offer to join my combination.

“There wasn’t the least doubt about the success of the two-headed



Blushed a double blush.

girl. In the very first week I took in two hundred and thirty dollars more than I had ever taken in in any one week in my life before. The museum was crowded day and night, and every mother in Boston

brought her children and told them that the two-headed girl taught some great moral lesson, and that they ought to imitate her, or avoid imitating her, or some other rubbish of that general kind. I never pretend to understand such things myself. I don't associate with 'freaks' to learn moral lessons from them. When I want moral lessons I'll go to Sunday-school and get 'em, instead of lowering myself to ask 'freaks' to give me lessons.

"The two-headed girl, as I have said in the beginning, was a Laplander, and couldn't speak anything but Laplandish. She had been with me about a month when I was astonished, one night after the exhibition had closed, and the 'freaks' had sat down to their usual banquet of pickles and cider, to hear one of her heads say to the other:

“‘You say that again, miss, and I’ll tear your eyes out!’

“‘Halloa!’ says I, ‘thought neither of you could speak any English?’



Brought both of her flowers.

“The girl blushed a double blush on all four cheeks, and said: ‘We’ve learned considerable since we came to America, but we never try to speak English because it ain’t pro-

fessional—not in our case, at any rate.’

“‘That’s all right,’ said I. ‘Speak what you like, only remember that I don’t allow no quarreling among my people.’

“The next day I made inquiries about the two-headed girl, and found out that both of her were in love with the same young man. He came to the show every day and always brought both of her flowers. I found out afterward that he was a philosopher, and was studying what he called ‘The Psychological Character of Female Dual Consciousness as Exemplified in the Two-Headed Girl of Lapland.’ I remember this, because he wrote an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* with that title, which would have been a first-class advertisement of the girl if she hadn’t happened to have retired to private life when

the article was published. He was a rather good-looking young fellow, and both the heads of the girl considered that he was in love with them. Mary, which is what we used to call the right-hand head, was sure that the young man was after her, and only gave flowers to Jane, who was the left-hand head, in order not to give away the real state of his affections to the general public; while Jane was equally certain that it was she the young man was in love with, and that he considered the other head to be very much in the way.

“The fat woman, who sat close to the two-headed girl on the stage, was really frightened at the way the two heads used to go on. She could hear them whispering to each other when the audience couldn’t hear anything said. Mary would put her cheek up against

Jane's and smile so sweetly that the audience would say, 'How perfectly lovely,' but all the time she would be saying, 'I'd like to bite your ugly ear off, miss!' and then presently Jane would put her arm around Mary's neck and whisper: 'You mean, deceitful thing! Wait till we get to our room, and I'll let you know!' The fat woman, who was all the time reading dime novels, said she was afraid some awful tragedy was preparing, and that presently the place would be drowned in blood. She wasn't altogether wrong, as you'll see presently.

"One night, just after the banquet was over, and the 'freaks' had mostly gone to their rooms, we heard such a dismal shrieking from the two-headed girl's room that we all rushed to the door. That is, when I say 'all,' I mean the giant

and the living skeleton, who had been sitting up with me a little later than usual. I never allow nothing improper on the part of nobody in my show, and I set the example in such matters myself. So I told the giant and the skeleton that we would withdraw, while the strong woman burst the door open and see what was the matter.

“Accordingly we did so, and the strong woman set her shoulder against the door, and it just sort of melted away, as you might say. She told me that she found the two-headed girl having the liveliest kind of a fight with herself. She was lying on the floor, and the half of her which was uppermost, and which happened to be Mary, was laying into the other half and hauling out the hair and the hairpins by handfuls. The strong woman, wanting to check the effusion of

hair, went to work to separate them, and succeeded altogether too well. In fact, when she got hold of Mary, and tried to pull her clear of Jane's hair, the two girls came apart altogether. The strong woman, who, like the rest of us, had believed in the two-headed girl, was that frightened when she saw that she had pulled her clean apart that she, in turn, yelled for help.

"This time I had to lay aside my scruples and see for myself what was the matter. There sat the strong woman on the floor, holding half of the two-headed girl in her arms, and there lay the other half, two or three yards off, on the carpet, crying her level best, and cussin' the rest of her in language which, if I am any judge of language, and I ought to be, was learned somewhere down by the

wharves. When I saw that Jane was more frightened than hurt, I told her to go to bed, and told the strong woman to take Mary into her room for the night. Mary went peaceably, for when the strong woman got hold of anybody, male or female, they generally did as she said.

“The next day I called up the two-headed girl and told them that our contract was at an end. ‘I will never,’ I said, ‘be a party to a fraud on the public, especially when it is sure to be found out, as this fraud of yours is. A committee of Boston surgeons was going to examine you this very day, and I, believing you to be genuine, was to offer them every facility. What I am offering now is a free passage for you both from here to New York, and don’t you ever let me hear of your trying to exhibit again, or I’ll

come out and tell the truth about you.'

"That was my only attempt at exhibiting a two-headed girl. I ought not to be hard on the girls, for they pulled me through a very tight place in my professional career; but at the same time they took me in, and, not being a part of the public, I don't like to be took in. However, it all happened long ago, and I defy any 'freak' to play any sort of game on me again. If there is any deceit to be practiced in my show, I conceive that I am the one to do it, and not the one to be practiced on."

The Mermaid.

"What I need," said the door-keeper one evening, when he had seemed more than usually thoughtful, "is some brand new attraction. This hyer thing of running the same show year after year, with the same giant and dwarf and fat woman and such, doesn't seem worthy of an enterprising Christian man."

"I thought you had tried novel attractions a good many times?" said I.

"So I have, but they never panned out well. I told you about several of them, and you could see for yourself that they were failures.

You've got to deal honestly with the public if you want to succeed. Of course, when I say honestly, I mean it in a reasonable sort of way. If you take your honesty straight, it won't work. You've got to mix it with a little intelligent enterprise before it can really be called the best policy.

"One of the best things that I ever tried in the line of novel attractions," continued the door-keeper, after a smoky pause, "was the Marquesas mermaid. She drew full houses day and night all the time I had her, which was about six weeks. I judged that she was worth to me all of two hundred and fifty dollars a week above her expenses while she lasted, but I had to pay her in damages more than she ever brought me. Probably it served me right for deceiving the public more than the public ought

to be deceived, but that isn't any consolation to me. I'm willing to stand the loss of a fair amount of money, and I don't mind being pitched into, to a moderate extent, by my conscience; but to lose your money and to have your conscience pegging away at you at the same time is a little too much, and that's what happened to me in this mermaid affair.

"She was brought to me by a stranger one day. I knew him by reputation, and his reputation was pretty bad, but I had never dealt with him before. I was exhibiting in New York at the time, and was doing a fair to middling business, though it showed signs of falling off owing to the presidential campaign, which was then in progress. If ever you go into the show business you'll wish you were living under a king. This hyer electing of a

president takes the public's attention away from all freaks excepting political ones, and people will walk ten miles to look at a presidential nominee sooner than walk around the corner to see a first-class fat woman. I believed in a republic as much as anybody before I went into the show business, but there is no denying the fact that no museum of freaks can stand the active competition of American politics.

"Well, to go back to this hyer mermaid. I was sitting in my office one day when this agent comes to me and says:

" 'Colonel, if you want an attraction that will knock all competition sky-high, including the Eyetalian opera and the Woman's Temperance Society, I've got it for you.'

" 'What is it?' said I. 'Not that I'm in need of any attraction, considering that I'm turning about a

thousand people away every day; but, for all that, I'm always ready to consider any fair offer. That is, providing it ain't no two-headed girl. One head apiece is all any freak that gets into my collection is allowed to have.'

"You see," added the doorkeeper, "I'd been sold once, and put in a very bad position, by a two-headed girl, and I wasn't going to be caught in that way a second time.

"'It's a genuwine South Sea mermaid,' said the agent, 'and a mighty handsome one, too.'

"'Then we can't trade,' said I. 'I've got one of your South Sea mermaids in one of my packing boxes, and I'll give her to you if you'll carry her away. A mermaid won't draw nowadays any more than a stuffed cat.'

"'But,' says the man, 'this is none of your regular old-style mer-

maids, made out of a fish and a monkey. I tell you she's a genuine mermaid, what sings and swims, and combs her hair, and talks. .Mighty intelligent she is, too. She can speak French just as well as you or me speaks American, though, of course, she don't speak it in public. If you'll let me bring her here some morning and give you a private exhibition, you'll admit that she is something altogether new in the mermaid line.'

"The next morning, when there was nobody in the museum except me, a van drove up, and a big packing box mounted on wheels was brought in. The agent was with it, and when he had sent away the men that brought the box, he opened it. There was a big glass tank inside of it, and inside of the tank was a very handsome young woman, got up as a mermaid. And

she was mighty well got up, too. The upper part of her was covered with India-rubber life preservers, fitted to her shape, and from the waist down she was covered with a blue and gold fishskin that ended in a practicable tail worked by her feet. What, with the life-preservers, and the ballast that was inclosed in the fishskin, she was constructed so as to swim in the tank, with her head and arms and shoulders clear of the water, and with her back hair, which was about four feet long and genuine so far as I know, floating out behind her.

“The agent filled up the tank with water, and the mermaid gave a performance, although she grumbled a little at having to do it in cold water. She would swim around the tank singing to herself in some sort of gibberish that the agent said was the Marquesas lan-

guage. Then she would sit on an artificial rock in the middle of the tank and comb her hair, and cuss a little to herself, as I afterwards found out, because the hair, being wet, would get in more or less of a tangle. Then she would keep on sitting on the rock while she would look at herself in a hand-mirror, and sigh as if she thought she was beginning to grow gray and wrinkled, which she wasn't. Presently she would start as if she saw some particular young man in the audience, and with a wild shriek she would dive in the tank and swim around under water for about ten minutes, as it seemed to me, though it was really only about four minutes. You see, she had begun her career as a champion woman fish, and as such was accustomed to eat and smoke under the water. This mermaid business was

only an expansion, as you might say, of her original profession.

“‘What do you say to that?’ asked the agent when the exhibition was over and the mermaid had



“‘Would sit on a rock and comb her hair.’”

gone into my private office to get dry and to put on her citizen's dress.

“Of course I told him that I didn't think much of it, but that I

was willing to give the girl an engagement, provided she would take a nominal salary. From that we argued the thing for pretty near an hour, I being determined that such a first-class attraction shouldn't escape me, and he being bound to stick me for a salary that was about equal to that of an Eyetalian primer donner. We came to an agreement after a while, and all three went to dinner together. I will say that, for a professional, the Marquesas mermaid was the most lady-like woman I have ever met, barring that she would drink more beer and whisky than, to my mind, a regular private lady would drink. But she said she had to do something to keep her blood circulating, and stave off the rheumatism, which was only reasonable, considering that she spent from three to four hours daily in her tank.

“Well! That mermaid was the very biggest success I ever had, and I’ve had a good many since I first went into the business, some thirty-seven years ago. About two-thirds of the people who came to see her believed the mermaid yarn, and the other third could not help admiring the splendid way in which she played her part, especially her performances under water. She was a remarkably well-behaved girl, too. I am sorry to say that she drank altogether too much, but she was always sober until after her day’s work was done; and if she did drink too much in her own bedroom, she never made a row and broke things, as a fat woman I once had (who took to drink in consequence of a disappointment in love) was in the habit of doing.

“But there was one person who hated the girl, and that was the

beautiful Circassian girl. From the day the mermaid came into the show the Circassian might as well have been out of it altogether, so far as attracting any attention went. Naturally she was jealous, as were all the other freaks, though they did not show it so openly. The thing that made the Circassian girl the maddest was that the giant, who had been paying her attention for some months, went clean over to the mermaid, and hadn't eyes in his head for any other girl.

"Now, the Circassian, who was a Spanish girl from Cuba, and about as bad-tempered as they make 'em, combined with the dwarf, who was another bad lot, and got up a scheme for getting square with the mermaid. They worked it in this way: The girl was accustomed to stay in her tank for an hour and a half at each per-

formance, and, of course, we had two performances a day. Naturally the water, no matter how warm it might be at the start, would grow cold in the course of an hour and a half, and, as it was late in the



They got up a scheme.

fall, and the weather was unseasonably cold, the mermaid could not stand such a change of temperature. So she had the tank supplied with warm water that was heated in a boiler in another room, and led into the tank by a pipe. This kept

the tank at an even temperature—for the warm water was continually flowing into it, while the overflow of cooler water ran off through the escape-pipe. She always saw for herself that the water in the boiler was of the right temperature before her performance began, and took care that the fire was brisk enough to keep the water properly heated without overheating it.

“One afternoon the dwarf pretended that he had the rheumatism so bad that he could not show, and so I gave him a day off. What does he do but hide himself in the room where the boiler was kept, and, after the mermaid had seen that the fire was all right, and had gone to her room to put on her mermaid clothes, he stirs up the fire, pours a lot of petroleum into the coal-scuttle, and then fills up the furnace as full as it would hold.

After which he sneaked out, and went to bed, pretending that he had been there all day.

“The mermaid went into her tank at two-thirty as usual, and, as I was standing close to her at the time, I noticed that she looked a little dissatisfied, the reason being, as I afterward found out, that she thought the water was too hot to be quite comfortable. She went through with the first part of her programme as usual; combing her hair, and singing in the mermaid language, and swimming round the tank with her head and shoulders out of water, but all the time that look of dissatisfaction was growing and spreading, as you might say. Then she came on to the second part of the programme, in which she performed her submarine feats, and no sooner had she sunk gracefully to the bottom

of the tank, than she came up to the surface again, with the unhappiest expression I ever saw on a woman's face. She supported herself by holding on to the edge of the tank, and kept as much of herself out of the water as she could, and I could see from the way that she looked at me that she was dying to say something to me. It wouldn't do, however, for her to let the public suppose that she knew how to speak any human language, so I just smiled at her to encourage her, never thinking what the real matter was.

"You see, the dwarf had managed the fire so that the water was by this time pretty near up to the boiling point, and kept growing hotter every minute. The girl stood it like a hero, and the perspiration stood out all over her forehead. She kept moving herself

around in the tank, trying to see if she could strike a cooler section of the water, but it was no use. The time came pretty soon when she had to take her choice between being boiled and giving herself away, and, naturally, she chose the latter. At first she tried to get out of the tank without opening her lips, but when she had swung herself up to the rim of the tank, and was hanging over it, the tank began to tip up, and presently the whole thing went over with a crash and pretty near drowned the people that were standing under it.

"The mermaid, when she saw what was going to happen, called out, 'Save me!' as loud as she could, and when she was picked up, with her fish-skin extension burst open, and her feet showing through it, she knew the game was up, and she thought she might as well re-

lieve her feelings with language. She stood up and made a speech to the public, saying that some scoundrel had tried to boil her, and threatening to kill him the first minute she could find him.

"I can overlook a good deal that people, and especially women, may say when they are excited, but the language the mermaid used was really too much, and the public wouldn't stand it. As soon as they got over their first surprise they felt that they had been swindled, and they said so. It was a tough job for me to get the mermaid away, and to get rid of the people. Of course, I had to give them their money back, but they said things about me that were very discouraging to a man whose living depends on the confidence that the public has in his honesty. That affair broke up my New York season, for

I didn't dare to face the public again, and I just shut up shop and moved my company on to Philadelphia the next day.

"How did I find out that the



Some scoundrel had tried to boil her.

dwarf and the Circassian girl had a hand in it? Why, because they naturally couldn't help bragging about it. However, I never said anything to them about it. What

was the use? 'Let bad enough alone' is my motto. But I can tell you I kept a sharp eye on the dwarf after that, and cured his rheumatism for him. The next time he came to me for a half-holiday on account of rheumatism, I just said: 'You get into a tank of boiling water, and your rheumatism won't trouble you any more.' He knew what I was referring to, and he never said rheumatism to me again."

Major Microbe.

“I’ve been in the show business now going on for forty-three years,” said the doorkeeper, “and I haven’t yet found a dwarf with human feelings. I can’t understand why it is, but there ain’t the least manner of doubt that a dwarf is the meanest object in creation. Take General Bacillus, the dwarf I have with me now. He is well made, for a dwarf, and when he does his poses plastic, such as ‘Ajax Defying the Lightning,’ or ‘Samson Carrying off Delilah by the Hair,’ and all the rest of those Scripture tablows, he is as pretty as a picture, provided, of course,

you don't get too near him. He is healthy, and has a good appetite, and he draws a good salary, and has no one except himself to look after. And yet that dwarf ain't happy! On the contrary, he is the most discontented, cantankerous, malicious little wretch that was ever admitted into a moral family show. And he ain't much worse than an ordinary dwarf. Now, the other freaks, as a rule, are contented so long as they draw well and don't fall in love.

"The living skeleton knows that he can't expect to live long—most of them die at about thirty-five—but, for all that, he is happy and contented. 'A short life and a merry one is what I goes in for,' he often says to me, and he seems to think that his life is a merry one, though I can't myself see where the merriment comes in. So with all

the rest of my people. They all seem to enjoy themselves except the dwarf. My own belief is that the organ of happiness has got to be



He would argue.

pretty big to get its work in, and that there ain't room in a dwarf's head for it to work.

"I had a dwarf with me once—

Major Microbe is what we called him on the bills, where he was advertised as the 'Smallest Man in the World,' which, of course, he wasn't; but, then, every dwarf is always advertised that way. It's a custom of the profession, and we don't consider it to be lying, any more than a president considers the tough statements lying that he makes in his annual message. A showman and a politician must be allowed a little liberty of statement, or they couldn't carry on their business. Well, as I was saying, this hyer Major Microbe was in my show a matter of ten years ago, when we were in Cincinnati, and he was about as vicious as they make them. The giant, who was a good seven-footer, working up to seven and a half feet, as an engineer might say, with the help of his boots and helmet, was the exact

opposite of the dwarf in disposition. He was altogether too good-tempered, for he was always trying to play practical jokes on the other freaks. He did this without any notion of annoying them, but it was injudicious; he being, like all other giants, weak and brittle.

“What do I mean by brittle? Why, I mean brittle, and nothing else. It’s a good United States word, I reckon. This hyer giant’s bones weren’t made of the proper materials, and they were always liable to break. He had to take the greatest care of himself, and to avoid arguing on politics or religion or anything like that, for a kick on the shins would be sure to break one of his legs, which would lay him on the shelf for a couple of months. As for his arms, he was forever breaking one or two of them, but that didn’t so much mat-

ter, for he could go on the stage with his arm in splints and a sling, and the public always supposed that he was representing a heroic soldier who had just returned from the battlefield.

“One day the giant put up a job on the dwarf that afterwards got them both into serious trouble. The giant was loafing around the place after dinner, and he found the dwarf asleep on a bench. What does he do but cover him up with a rug and then go off in search of the fat woman, who was a sure enough fat woman, and weighed in private life four hundred and nineteen pounds. The giant was popular with the sex, and the fat woman was glad to accept his invitation to come with him and listen to a scheme that he pretended to have for increasing the attractions of fat women. He led her up to

where the dwarf was asleep on the bench and invited her to sit down, saying that he had arranged a cushion for her to make her comfortable. Of course she sat down, and



He found the dwarf.

sat down pretty solid, too, directly on the dwarf. The dwarf yelled as if he had room for the voice of two full-grown men, and the fat woman, as soon as she felt something squirming under her, thought

that one of the boa constrictors had got loose, and that she had sat down on it. So, naturally, she fainted away. I came running in with one of my men as soon as I heard the outcries, and, after a while, we managed to pry up the fat woman with a couple of cart-rungs and get the dwarf out from under her, after which she came to in due time and got over her fright. But the dwarf was a good deal flattened out by the pressure, and I was afraid at first that his ribs had been stove in. It turned out in the end that he was not seriously injured; but he was in the worst rage against the giant that you can imagine, and would have killed him then and there if he had been able to do it.

“I knew well enough that in course of time the dwarf would get square with the giant, no matter

how long it might take and how much it might cost. He was as revengeful as a Red Indian. I warned the giant that he must keep a sharp lookout, or the dwarf would do him a mischief; but he said 'he calculated he was big enough to take care of himself, and that he wasn't afraid of no two-foot dwarf that ever breathed.' Of course, this sounded brave, but my own belief is that the giant was pretty badly frightened. I noticed that he never allowed himself to be alone with the dwarf, and was always careful to mind where he stepped, so as not to get tripped up by strings stretched across the path, or anything of that sort. The dwarf pretended that he had forgotten the whole business, and was as friendly with the giant as he had ever been; but I knew him well enough to know that he never for-

got anything, and was only waiting for a chance.

“Pretty soon little accidents began to happen to the giant. One day he would find that his helmet, which was made of pasteboard, had fallen into a tub of water, and gone to everlasting jelly. This would oblige him to show himself bare-headed, which took off several inches from his professional height. Another day his boots would be in the tub, and he wouldn’t be able to get them on. I’ve seen him go on the stage in a general’s uniform, with carpet slippers and no hat, which every one knew must be contrary to the regulations of the Arabian army, in which he was supposed to hold his commission.

“One night his bedstead broke down under him, and he came very near breaking a leg or so. In the morning he found out that some

one had sawed a leg of the bedstead nearly all the way through, and, of course, he knew that the dwarf had done it. But you couldn't prove anything against the dwarf. He would always swear that he never had any hand in the accidents, and there was never any evidence against him that anybody could get hold of. I didn't mind what games he played on the giant as long as the giant wasn't made to break anything that would lay him on the shelf, and I told the dwarf that I was the last man to interfere with any man's innocent amusements, but that in case the giant happened to break a leg, I should go out of the giant and dwarf business at once. But that didn't scare him a particle. He knew that he was worth his salary in any dime museum in America, and, more than that, he had money enough

laid up in the bank to live on, assuming, of course, that he could draw it out before the cashier should bolt to Canada with it. So he was as independent as you please, and told me that if I chose to hold him responsible for other people's legs he couldn't help it, and had nothing to say about it.

"At that time I had a female Samson. She wasn't the combined female contortionist and strongest woman in the world that is in my show at present, but she was in about the same line of business. These strong women are all genuine, you understand. You can embellish them a little on handbills, and you can announce that the cannon that the strong woman fires from her shoulder weighs a hundred or two pounds more than it actually weighs; but, unless a strong woman is really strong and

no mistake, she might as well try to pass herself off as a living skeleton or a two-headed girl at once. The fact is, the great majority of freaks are genuine, and the business is a thoroughly honest one at bottom. Why, if you told the exact truth in the handbills about every freak in my show, barring the tattooed girl and the wild man, they would still constitute a good drawing attraction in any intelligent community.

"This female Samson was a good sort of woman in her way, though she was a little rough and a bit what you might call masculine in her ways. She didn't like the dwarf, and he didn't like her.

"The freaks were all at supper one night when the dwarf said something insulting to the female Samson. He sat right opposite to her, and she just reached across the

table and pulled him over to her by his collar. Then she stretched him across her lap and laid into him with her slipper till he howled as if he was a small boy who had gone in swimming on Sunday and his mother had just found it out. It wasn't so much the slipper that hurt him, though the female Samson put all her muscle into the operation, but it was the disgrace of the thing; and when you remember that the dwarf was forty-two years old, you can understand that he felt that the woman had taken a liberty with him. However, the next day he seemed to have forgotten all about it, and when the giant reminded him of the circumstance, which he did every little while, the dwarf would grin and say that we must let the women do what they liked, for they were a superior sort of being.

"One of the female Samson's best feats was done in company with the dwarf and the giant. She had a horizontal bar fixed on the stage, about ten feet above the floor. On this bar she used to



She pulled him over by the collar.

swing head downwards, just hooking her knees around it, as all the trapeze artists do. It looks sort of uncomfortable, but it is nothing when you are used to it. I had a trapeze chap once who would often

go to sleep that way in hot weather. He said that all the blood in his body went into his head, and that made him feel sleepy, while it cooled off his body and legs. There's no accounting for tastes, but as for me, give me a good bed where I can stretch out, and I'll never ask to sleep on a trapeze bar.

"As I was saying, the female Samson would swing on this bar, and then she would take the dwarf's belt in her teeth and hold him in that way for five minutes. There was a swivel in the belt, so that the dwarf would spin round while she was holding him, which he didn't like much, but which pleased the public. After she had swung the dwarf she would do the same act with the giant. She had to be very careful not to drop the giant, for he was terribly afraid of breaking a leg, being, as I have

said, particularly brittle ; but she always said that he was as safe in her teeth as he would be if he was lying in his bed.

“It must have been about a fortnight after the dwarf was sat on by the fat woman, and a week or more after he had been corrected in public by the female Samson, that we had an unusually large evening audience, and everybody was in excellent spirits. The female Samson had swung the dwarf in her teeth, and after she had let go of him he had climbed up on a chair just behind her, and stood with his arms stretched out over her and the giant as if he was saying ‘Bless you, my children,’ which was a regular part of the act, and never failed to bring him a round of applause, and induce people to say, ‘What a jolly little chap that dwarf is!’ When the female Samson had got a good

grip of the giant's belt, and had raised him about five feet from the floor, the dwarf leaned a little bit forward and ran a pin into the female Samson's ankle, or thereabouts. Nobody saw him do it, but it was easy to prove it on him afterwards, for he dropped the pin on the floor when he had finally got through with it, and everybody recognized it as one of his scarf-pins.

"The woman would naturally have shrieked when she felt the pin, but she had her mouth full of the giant, and she couldn't do more than mumble a little in a half-smothered sort of way. The dwarf paid no attention to that, but gave her another eye-opener with the pin. It went in about an inch, judging from what the female Samson said when she described her sufferings, and it must have hurt

her pretty bad; but she was full of pluck and bound to carry out her performance to the end. She stood three or four more prods, and then, not being able to stand it any longer without expressing her feelings in some way, she unhooked one leg and fetched the dwarf a kick on the side of the head that reminded him that it was about time for him to get into his own room and lock the door, and convinced him that there ain't a bit of exaggeration in the tough stories that they tell about the kicking powers of an army mule. The kick sent the dwarf clean across the platform, and the people, not understanding the situation, began to cry 'Shame.' Whether this flurried the female Samson or not, or whether she lost her balance entirely on account of having unhooked one leg, I don't know.

What I do know is that she slipped off the bar, and she and the giant struck the floor with a crash that would have broken planks, if it had not been that the platform was built expressly to stand the strain of the fat woman.

“It wouldn’t have been so bad if she had just dropped the giant, and hung on to the bar herself. In that case he would probably have broken his left leg and arm and collar bone, just as he did break them, but his ribs would have been all right. As it was, the female Samson’s head came down just in the center of him, and stove in about three-fourths of his ribs. She wasn’t hurt at all, for, being a woman, and falling on her head, there was nothing for her to break, and the giant was so soft that falling on him didn’t even give her a headache. When some volunteers

from the audience had picked up the giant and put him on a stretcher and carried him to the hospital, where the doctors did their best to mend him, the female Samson had



Took four men and a policeman to hold her.

a chance to explain, and the finding of a long scarf-pin on the platform, just under the bar, was evidence that she had told the truth, and corroborated the red stain on her stocking.

"It took four men and a policeman to hold her, and get her locked up in her room, she was that set on tearing the dwarf into small pieces, and she'd have done it, too, if she could have got at him. He had sense enough to see the situation, and to discharge himself without waiting for me to discharge him. He ran away in the course of the night, and I never saw him again. I don't think he ever went into another dime museum, and I have heard that he got a situation as inspector of gas meters, which is very probable, considering what a malicious little rascal he was. Well, we have to deal with all sorts of people in our business, and I suppose it's the same with you, though you haven't mentioned what your business is. But you take my advice and steer clear of dwarfs. There ain't a man living

that can do anything with them except with a club, and no man likes to take a club to anything as small as a dwarf."

THE END.

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